

S E C R E T

INSPECTOR GENERAL'S SURVEY

OF

CABLE SECRETARIAT

DECEMBER 1963

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INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the Inspector General survey of the Cable Secretariat, a separate component in the Office of the Director. Three inspectors conducted the survey during the month of November 1963. They interviewed all employees on duty during the inspection, reviewed the various administrative arrangements and records, and contacted representative offices served by the Secretariat.

2. The Cable Secretariat, under the Cable Secretary, has long had the responsibility for coordinating the processing and dissemination of CIA cables. It also disseminates within CIA cables of intelligence interest from other agencies and departments. Certain categories of specially sensitive material are excepted from handling by the Secretariat. The latest Agency regulations failed to include a statement of the functions of the Cable Secretariat and we have recommended that this be corrected in the next issuance.

3. Astride the flow of administrative, technical, operational, and intelligence communications, the successful functioning of the Secretariat is essential to the Agency's operations. The recognition of this vital role is evident in every working aspect of the office. The Secretariat is organized to ensure a continuing timely, secure, and accurate flow of cables. It is unusually well organized

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and efficient. We have little of significance to recommend concerning its organization. The Cable Secretary is well aware of trends affecting the operation of his office, such as the continual increase in the volume of cable communications, and keeps its administrative organization under continuing review.

4. Over the years the Secretariat has developed a highly refined system for processing the ever-increasing volume of material that passes through it. While its efficiency has increased as a result of the initiative and resourcefulness of its management, there is good reason to doubt that further refinements can continue to meet the rising work load without an eventual increase in personnel. As the Cable Secretary is currently optimistic that certain new procedures now pending will overcome some of his present problems in this respect we have made no recommendations on personnel strength for the present. However, we have recommended that this problem be reviewed thoroughly by the end of 1964.

5. We found some personnel problems, which can be attributed largely to the character of the work. The monotony of its repetitive routine, combined with its unrelieved pressure, produces a sense of restlessness among certain elements of the Secretariat. The production procedures that have served so successfully to help fulfill the Secretariat's mission have tended to automate the management of

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personnel making the office's command seem remote and aloof from its personnel. Our recommendations on this point, however, are limited, although we have suggested a change of emphasis in the techniques with which personnel are handled.

6. The inspection did not go deeply into the question of the fragmentation of the Agency's "watch" mechanisms and "watch officer" functions but because of the Secretariat's unique role the issue arose in discussions with officers both inside and outside the Secretariat. As the problem exceeded the scope of this inspection the issue is only noted with the recommendation that it be made the subject of a special study.

7. The Cable Secretariat is fulfilling its basic mission admirably. Such recommendations as we have made should be viewed in that context. Judged by the highest standards of performance it must be considered a hard hitting organization doing a difficult job successfully.

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ORGANIZATION

1. The Cable Secretariat was established in 1952 as a part of the Office of the Director, to ensure the Director's direct control of Agency cable communications. While the management problem that originally led to that development no longer exists, the administrative subordination of the Secretariat is the same. We believe that this should be continued, as control of cable communications is essential to ensure the integrity of command and the effective direction of intelligence activities.

2. The Secretariat has long been responsible for coordinating all policies governing the handling of Agency cables, and for processing and disseminating them--both incoming and outgoing traffic--within CIA. Since 1962 it has also been responsible for dissemination within CIA of cables of intelligence interest from other agencies and departments, such as State Department political reporting. Exceptions to these general categories of cables handled by the Secretariat can be found in reporting on special projects, such as those in the Office of Special Activities (OSA) in the DD/S&T and SIGINT reporting exchanged with the National Security Agency. These materials have special handling restrictions and we propose no change in existing arrangements, except such as might result from Recommendation No. 4 (see page 14). Regulations had

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been specific in outlining the Cable Secretariat's responsibilities until 16 August 1963, when the revision of [] pertaining to the Executive Director to whom the Secretariat reports directly, omitted any reference to it. While there have been no repercussions from this it leaves the status of the Cable Secretariat uncertain.

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[] will require further amendment to reflect the new responsibilities of the Executive Director/Comptroller, and steps should be taken in that amendment to set forth clearly the missions and functions of the Secretariat.

It is recommended that:

No. 1

The Deputy Director (Support) provide for the amendment of [] to include provisions outlining the missions and functions of the Cable Secretariat.

3. The dissemination of cables is conducted in the Message Center, the key organizational feature of the Secretariat. The Message Center can be described as a large working area in which analysts, logging clerks, typists, mail and file clerks, multilith press operators, and archivists engage in processing, reproducing, disseminating and filing cable traffic. The Message Center is open, and filled with moving people and noise-producing mechanical equipment. In periods of intense activity the volume of sound and the movement of people become distracting factors. This adds measurably, we believe, to the sense of tension that is already a

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part of the continual pressure under which Secretariat personnel work. Such steps as installing partial partitions around the analysts, muffling or sound-proofing mechanical equipment, installing special acoustical tiles on the walls, developing more salubrious color schemes for the area, and, perhaps, providing background music (not Rock-and-Roll) could, collectively, improve the working conditions in the Secretariat and reduce the sense of tension that pervades the organization. At the time of the inspection the Cable Secretary initiated a survey looking to a correction of this problem. We feel that it would be helpful to him to seek outside advice as some of the problems are technical in nature.

It is recommended that:

No. 2

The Cable Secretary seek expert technical assistance through the Deputy Director (Support) in surveying the steps that can be taken to improve the physical working conditions and atmosphere of the Cable Secretariat Message Center.

4. At the time of the inspection approximately 80 of the Secretariat's 95 employees were assigned to Message Center operations. Superimposed upon the Message Center organization, but technically separate from it, are nine Cable Secretariat Duty Officers (CSDOs). These are the senior and most experienced employees in the Secretariat's production machinery and, although without direct supervisory responsibilities for Message Center operation, are

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considered representatives of the Cable Secretary. In addition to the above, there are six other employees, including the Cable Secretary, who are responsible for general administration and management.

5. Prior to October 1962 the Duty Officers had exercised a supervisory responsibility for Message Center operations. At that time they were relieved of this responsibility to permit them to concentrate on the preliminary screening of all cables to ensure timely dissemination of items requiring prompt attention. This had the collateral effect of removing the bulk of qualified supervisory talent from the chain of command and replacing them with a new level of supervisors titled Message Center Chiefs. This will be discussed further under the section dealing with personnel management.

6. An important factor in Secretariat organization is its division into three relatively independent shifts to meet the requirement for 24-hour service. Of these three shifts the day shift is the largest, with about 40 persons, to cope with both the flow of cables and the inquiries generated during the day when the bulk of Agency personnel works.

7. The security of cable traffic is the subject of careful arrangements in the Secretariat. All incoming traffic arrives by

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tube directly in the CSDO area. Thus the preliminary screening is by the Secretariat's senior and more experienced production personnel. Top Secret and other sensitive traffic is flagged and handled at one isolated desk. The cable indicators limiting distribution are established by other components--largely in the DD/P and the Office of the Director--and are honored in detail by the Secretariat as part of the mechanical processing of traffic. In those instances, however, where the CSDO feels that indicated dissemination should be further restricted he will so provide pending a check with the component concerned.

8. The dissemination process starts with the CSDO. Cables are then routed to the cable analysts who determine dissemination to various Agency components on the basis of extensive requirements with which each analyst must be thoroughly familiar. Changes to these requirements are posted daily. Whenever incoming CIA cables contain references to other CIA traffic, the cable analyst prepares synopses of the references for the convenience of recipients. Despite the extensive knowledge required about Agency organization, we feel that this activity is basically more clerical in nature than analytical in the broader sense. After completion of the cable analyst's action the cables are printed in predetermined, but by no means standard, numbers for distribution to the appropriate Agency components.

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9. We believe that the Secretariat carries out the assigned function of cable dissemination with outstanding proficiency, while maintaining security in protection of organizational compartmentation. We interviewed principal consumers in both the DD/P and the DD/I and found nothing but commendation for the manner in which this responsibility--its main mission--is fulfilled.

10. Cable dissemination is a highly specialized activity. In the Secretariat a career toward the top is tied to selection for training as a cable analyst, a selection which is based on evaluations by the Assessment and Evaluation Staff (Medical Staff). As the requirements for this work are unique to the Secretariat it has developed its own carefully conceived training program, which draws on the Office of Training for staff support and assistance.

11. For those selected for analyst training advancement is relatively rapid, when compared with other components of the Agency. We reviewed files of a number of employees who have moved from GS-3 and GS-4 grades to senior analyst positions, GS-9, in three to four years' time. To keep the normally less desirable night jobs staffed it is Secretariat policy to offer promotions on the condition that assignment to the night shift is accepted. Return to the day shift is based on seniority, as openings occur. In view of the 24-hour character of Secretariat operation we feel that this

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device is entirely compatible with good practices of personnel management. It does tend to inhibit advancement of personnel who cannot accept night work, e.g., women with families, or persons whose health restricts their working hours. In any event, advancement to senior analyst is reasonably rapid, although this will tend to slow down.

12. At the time of the inspection there were 12 persons slotted against the 16 GS-9 analyst positions, with at least two more scheduled for slotting against those positions. Candidates for the two remaining GS-9 slots had not yet been selected. Beyond that point promotion is subject to attrition in the higher grades. The next level offers three GS-10 slots as Assistant Message Center chief, and three GS-11 slots as Message Center chiefs. Next there are the nine GS-12 CSDO positions. Because of the slowing down of promotions at the GS-9 level we scouted the possibility of a career or training program that might improve the job mobility of Secretariat personnel to other lines of work. Our conclusion was that the general educational level in the Secretariat limited the results that could be expected from such a program, except in isolated instances. As it is, the Secretariat encourages training on the part of its personnel. Lower level supervisory courses, Clandestine Services Review courses, and similar training have been

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taken by a number of the analysts. However, this has served more to broaden their understanding of the Agency than it has to open new career opportunities for them. We believe that the Secretariat does about all that is reasonable under the circumstances in this field, and, in fact, that it has a well conceived training program.

13. In 1963 the Signal Center Archives was transferred to the Cable Secretariat and renamed the Cable Archives. It is the repository and reference center for Agency cable traffic. This move is consistent with the Secretariat's responsibility for internal control of cables, and was in compliance with recommendations of the Records Management Staff. That staff also recommended termination of microfilming cables, which it was estimated would save some \$10,000 a year. Under the new system a year's supply of hard-copy cables will be retained in the Secretariat, copies prior to that being retired to the Records Center [] Twenty-four-hour service on the records [] is available routinely, and two-to-three-hour service is available in emergencies. While we have some reservation about the termination of the readily available microfilm reference, we are inclined to let time and experience test this new system. The Cable Secretary is following the effects of the change and will raise the issue if service seems to suffer because of it.

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14. We observed that among the typists, especially on the day shift, reference was made to the "head typist." Although the Table of Organization provided for no such slot, all typist positions having a GS-5 grade, one member of the day shift had been graded on his Fitness Reports on his performance as a supervisor. It is apparent that for at least the day shift the volume of work is such that the typists' work requires a supervisor among them. To the extent that practice has proven that such is the case it should be reflected in grade structure.

It is recommended that:

No. 3

The Cable Secretary seek the assistance of the Office of Personnel in establishing that certain typists have supervisory duties in relation to other typists, with the intent of upgrading those positions to the extent that their additional responsibility justifies it.

15. In addition to the Cable Secretariat, there are a number of watch office activities being carried on in the Agency, and these will be increased by the establishment of a new mechanism in the DD/S&T, a Foreign Missile Space Analysis Center, that will have many of the characteristics of a watch office. Representative activities are listed below:

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<u>Responsible Office</u>	<u>Function</u>
Office of Current Intelligence, DD/I	CIA Watch Office
Office of Operations, DD/I	
Collection Guidance Staff, DD/I	Operations Center
Cable Secretariat, O/DCI	Clandestine Services Watch Office
FI Staff, DD/P	Intelligence Watch (co-located with Cable Secretariat but separate)
Office of Security, DD/S	Night Security Officer
Office of Communications, DD/S	Signal Center Duty Officer

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All of these activities are operating with their own rules and arrangements. Extensive arrangements and continuing contacts have been established between the various watch mechanisms, but the fact remains that there is no place in the Agency where all the material that may prove vital to a single crisis situation may be reviewed at technical levels. OCI Watch personnel cited instances (the most recent Berlin crisis being one) in which critical material was "lost" for hours because erroneous indicators sent traffic to a component that had no watch officer. In addition reference was made to what was described as a trend whereby the Departments of State and Defense were centralizing their respective operational watch functions. This centralization had permitted such improved communication between

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those departments that CIA now often finds its receipt of material behind exchanges between those offices. In fact, instances were cited in which CIA first learned of certain developments from watch officers stationed in the White House.

16. Our present inspection did not permit time to explore the broad and complex field of community watch mechanisms, nor the problem that would be raised within CIA by a centralization of its watch mechanism. However, it was sufficient to indicate that growing alerting responsibilities are making current arrangements increasingly inadequate.

It is recommended that:

No. 4

The Executive Director appoint a special working group composed of representatives of the Deputy Directors to explore the establishment of a centralized CIA Watch Office.

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PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

1. The central feature of Secretariat activity is its never-ending flow of cables. Administrative emphasis, perforce, has concentrated on this problem. Over the years the Cable Secretary has developed detailed statistics on Secretariat production, which have served as the basis for important managerial decisions within the Secretariat. Production figures are compiled from the daily log in which the flow of work is logged upon receipt and upon completion of processing, by categories of traffic: IN and OUT CIA cables, non-CIA cables, etc. Statistics based on this information show production totals for the office as well as for each shift. This is helpful in developing budget requests. It also helps plan the use of personnel. We are satisfied that these statistics are maintained accurately and present a valid picture of the Cable Secretariat's work load.

2. While fluctuating from month to month, the Secretariat's work load has shown a steady trend upward. During 1962 an average of approximately 38,000 work items was processed monthly. Thus far in 1963 the monthly average has risen to 45,000. At the time of the inspection the Cable Secretary estimated that the Message Center carried an almost continual backlog of 350-450 cables, although there are occasional spells when that backlog is worked

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out. It should be noted that this backlog is comprised of relatively low priority cables, the more critical ones having been selected for processing by the CSDOs during their preliminary screening. At the rate of a cable a minute, the backlog would be worked through in some six to seven and a half hours. This is not unacceptable in terms of the importance of the particular traffic in question. While the presently rising volume can be expected to level off eventually, there is no indication that this will be in the foreseeable future.

3. This continual rise in the volume of work will inevitably confront the Cable Secretary with the problem of determining the extent to which additional personnel are needed. This is not a problem that he can control, as his work is the result of the activities of others. His organization must process what comes to it. Under present conditions there is little if any slack in the Secretariat. With it apparently becoming standard practice to carry an almost continual backlog under normal conditions, it follows that in time of crisis serious strains will be placed on the Secretariat's ability to fulfill its mission. In fact, it has been reported to the inspectors that during the Cuban crisis the Secretariat fell far behind in processing the heavy flow of traffic.

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4. As the control point for the flow of critical information the Secretariat is an essential activity. Its operation with too small a margin in personnel strength could prove critical in future crises. At the time of the inspection the Cable Secretary was well along in the exploration of new equipment and the development of new procedures to increase the production capacity of the office. He was confident that over the next year these new programs will contribute to a significant increase in Secretariat productivity. We are impressed with the new programs, and with the Cable Secretary's evaluation of their potential, especially in view of his long record of success in such innovations in the past. However, we hold some reservations about the extent to which mechanical efficiency can continue to meet all the demands that may be placed upon the office. While we accept the Cable Secretary's evaluation at this time, we still feel that the entire problem of staffing should be reviewed after completion of the new steps, to determine the extent to which they meet all the demands levied upon the Secretariat.

It is recommended that:

No. 5

The Cable Secretary request the Salary and Wage Division of the Office of Personnel to conduct a full review of staffing of the Cable Secretariat to determine its adequacy; that the findings with appropriate recommendations be reported to the Executive Director/Comptroller; that this study be undertaken no later than January 1965.

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5. We have stated our acceptance of Secretariat production figures for the whole office as a reliable basis for administrative planning. We are somewhat less confident that production statistics on individual performance have the same degree of validity as the over-all figures.

6. The statistics for analysts require considerable time to compile and considerable interpretation to be meaningful. For instance, as between CIA IN and OUT cables, the latter can be handled more expeditiously and tend to raise the production record of those who happen to handle a larger share of OUT cables. This is especially true for the night shift, which has higher production figures partly because it handles a larger proportion of OUT cables. In addition, figures are subject to manipulation in a variety of ways by the analysts, the details of which are not pertinent to this report. The point is that these statistics have a limited usefulness as tools for personnel and production management. While instances came to our attention in which these figures made possible a check on the use of various analysts' time, we are inclined to view this as primarily the responsibility of the working supervisor and not requiring further checking by record.

7. In the case of the press operators, various factors also tend to invalidate the production figures as a true reflection of

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individual performance. For instance, statistics are kept on mats run off and cables processed. A cable which is very short and requires only three copies would be tallied the same as a very long cable that also required twenty copies. Further, defective equipment or specially demanding production standards for certain consumers tend to affect the final production figures.

8. In view of the dubious reliability of these particular figures we question their usefulness as a management instrument. In fact, we feel that there has been a tendency to use the figures in place of the exercise of certain essential supervisory initiatives and judgments. In addition, as we point out in the discussion of personnel management below, these statistics and their apparent role in Secretariat management have become an important irritant.

9. We believe that, with the exception of occasional spot checks, there is value to be gained from the elimination of records on individual production. We suggest that this be done on a trial basis, for a period of from one to three months. The continued review of both shift and over-all office production, coupled with supervisory leadership, should ensure adequate management control of individual production.

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It is recommended that:

No. 6

The Cable Secretary, on a trial basis, eliminate individual production statistics as a regular part of Cable Secretariat administration, and that production figures be maintained on a shift and office basis during the trial period to determine what effect, if any, there is on over-all production; that if production is not affected adversely, these individual production statistics be discontinued permanently, to be used in the future on only a spot check basis.

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PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

1. Special attention was given in this survey to the personnel management and promotion policies of the Cable Secretariat. Complaints in this area had come to the attention of the Inspector General (independent of the current survey) and this inspection provided an opportunity to evaluate them. This is the one area of Secretariat management in which we feel changes of administrative emphasis are desirable.

2. A number of factors combine to create a problem of personnel management that is unique to the Secretariat. One aspect of this is similar to that observed in other offices where large volumes of paper must be processed by repetitive and highly routinized procedures. The essentially clerical character of this work, despite an element of professional analytical effort, necessarily limits the grade structure of the organization. As with other offices where such is the case this tends to produce a vague dissatisfaction on the part of the employees with both the character of the work and the opportunities it offers. Superimposed on this is the necessary orientation of the Secretariat towards timely and accurate dissemination of essential communications. In the face of a continually rising volume of work this contributes to an atmosphere of unrelieved pressure generated by the mission of the office.

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3. The Cable Secretary has been successful in gaining for the Secretariat employees a better grade structure and greater opportunity for advancement than is usually available in related lines of work. This is particularly so in view of the relatively low educational level in the higher grades of the office. Below the office of the Cable Secretary there are nine GS-12 positions, only two of which are held by college graduates. Of the next 23 GS-11, 10, and 9 slots only one is occupied by a college graduate. Ironically these extra career opportunities have whetted rather than satisfied appetites for promotion. In fact it was in this area that we found the most unrest in the Secretariat. This is due, we believe, to a combination of production management techniques and loss of communication between Secretariat management and the rank and file.

4. We have discussed elsewhere in this report the maintenance of the production records of the individual analysts. These are available for comparison by the analysts. We have explained why we feel that these particular statistics are not completely reliable for management purposes. Undoubtedly they serve to create a highly competitive sense among the analysts, who are keenly aware of their respective positions as shown by these figures. How much the practice actually contributes to increased production, however,

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is speculative. We found the analysts generally conscientious and susceptible to being led rather than having to be prodded into production. Because of the way they have come to be used, individual production records have been made to appear as an essential ingredient to career performance. Therefore, when a junior analyst with an undistinguished record was promoted over analysts not only senior to him, but whose production records and professional standing in the eyes of their colleagues are superior to his, such a promotion is naturally subjected to critical attention by those who were passed by.

5. Having been made aware of the general problem in advance, although not in the detail outlined above, the inspectors reviewed carefully the personnel files of all employees in the Secretariat. Specifically we have checked the educational backgrounds of the individual employees, their general abilities as shown by the clerical aptitude tests given them at the time they entered on duty with the Agency, and their performance over the years as reflected in Fitness Reports. Also we have discussed with the Assessment and Evaluation Staff (A&E) that staff's appraisal of a selected number of employees arrived at on the basis of the results of the Professional Employees Test Batteries (PETB), which are customarily taken by Cable Secretariat employees. Our detailed interviews of

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Secretariat personnel have provided us, we believe, with a well-rounded understanding of Secretariat employees, both individually and collectively.

6. As a result we are satisfied that the particular promotion action in question (the junior analyst described in paragraph 4 of this section) was based on what was considered by Secretariat management to be the most objective standard available for that decision. In that instance the A&E Staff had been requested to make a relative rating of specified analysts for supervisory positions and had singled out the analyst in question as having the greatest potential. Supervisory potential is different from past performance as an analyst, and it was this point that concerned Secretariat management. However, the analysts were aware of only one standard and saw only that a not-outstanding colleague was jumped over them. While we feel that Secretariat management relied too heavily upon the A&E judgment, rather than using it as only "one datum" in its decision as the A&E Staff believed it should be used, this remains the sort of judgment that is peculiarly within the realm of command prerogative, so we do not make a recommendation.

7. One of the factors contributing to the restlessness that we found in some portions of the office is the loss of personal contact between senior supervisors and the production levels. This

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already exists in part by the division of the Secretariat into three shifts to provide round-the-clock service. This was compounded in 1962 when the more senior Duty Officers were removed from positions of supervisory responsibility. Supervision devolved upon the less experienced Message Center chiefs, who, by their own descriptions and those of their subordinates, seem to serve more as production foremen than as supervisors in the normal sense. The concurrent concentration of the Cable Secretary and his senior assistants on office administrative detail resulted in a real gap in personnel management in the Secretariat. Employees do not "identify" with the front office, and feel themselves cogs in an impersonal production machine. This intangible factor could assume increased significance if it were permitted to continue to develop unabated. We feel this to be sufficiently important that the Cable Secretary should free himself from much of the detailed review of cables now carried on by him in order to devote more time to assuring himself that the Message Center chiefs become more than production foremen, and to make his presence and positive personality better known to those who work in his organization. We are fully appreciative of the problems of treating with an atmosphere of dissension among restless lower graded employees, but it was apparent to us that if this general atmosphere is not changed, it

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could have an unfortunate effect on Secretariat production. We also realize that the problem is an intangible one that cannot be dealt with expeditiously and directly. While this is a matter on which we have such a clear impression it is not subject to the usual recommendations. It lies peculiarly in the responsibility of command, and we feel that in this instance the raising of the issue without specific recommendation is sufficient.

8. Secretariat personnel security procedures conform in general with applicable regulations. There is one aspect, however, which gives us some concern. In the recent IG special survey on Agency personnel security practices, emphasis was placed on the role of supervisors, particularly in the lower grades, as an essential element in maintaining an effective over-all security program. Specifically, we stressed the need for each supervisor to know his subordinates to the extent that personal behavior patterns indicative of potential security vulnerabilities might be detected and dealt with at an early stage. We feel, in this connection, that a certain weakness exists in the Cable Secretariat where supervisors have minimal knowledge of the off-duty habits and conditions of livelihood of their employees. This condition is compounded by the loss of supervisory continuity resulting from rotation of personnel between shifts. The Message Center chiefs, who devote the bulk of

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their time to obtaining maximum production, tend to give limited attention to personnel problems other than those directly affecting the production of their shifts.

It is recommended that:

No. 7

The Cable Secretary review personnel management procedures to ensure that he and his key supervisors have a reasonable awareness of the attitudes and problems of individual Secretariat employees which might be indicative of potential security vulnerabilities.

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